

acquiring or using something that most men already have. Real power lies in knowing things or having abilities other people do not have.

A great mistake of the uninitiated is to equate successful replication with essential goodness. Successfully replicating memetic structures (the beliefs of the masses) for the most part possess the power to replicate well and therefore unify human belief; no more, no less. To repeat, the strongest power inherent in most belief systems (complex memetic structures) is the power to unify great numbers of people through the unification of their beliefs. Unification of belief equates to unification of action. Nations and religions are formed on memetic structures possessing extraordinarily strong and efficient replication mechanisms.

Though some successful replicating memetic structures may contain great inherent truth and power, most do not. To believe something must be true and sacred simply because most people believe it to be true and sacred is usually a mistake. Most people believe most of what they believe because that belief has successfully replicated within their mind.

The key to creating spectacular widespread willed change in the RSM is the creation or discovery of appropriate and powerful memetic structures to which an individual purposefully binds successful replication mechanisms. Alternatively, the opposite tact could be followed whereby a proven replication structure is taken and bound to a powerful and meaningful unfertile structure.

If an individual wishes to make a fundamental alteration in the RSM, that change would have to be effected by large numbers of people. Thus, the individual might attempt to bind his fashioned memetic structure onto an existing structure which has already proven extraordinarily effective. Memetic structures which have proven to be extraordinarily effective can easily be discovered within society. Some examples of such extraordinarily effective structures are large religions, corporations, educational institutions, television shows, movies, and political systems. If

a fashioned memetic structure is successfully implanted into an effective existing institutionalized structure it will stand an excellent chance of affecting large numbers of people.

Though an excellent plan in theory, in practice it is very difficult to fashion and deliver a memetic structure which will effectively bind to any major dominant memetic structure. The dominant memetic structures ruling the minds of the masses achieved their dominance through successful resistance against the advances of countless foreign memetic structures, and in the process evolved to become super-effective at repulsing memetic attack. Therefore it is highly unlikely (though still possible) for any fashioned memetic structure to successfully infiltrate the dominant memetic structures of the age. Any invading memetic structures will be subject to the dominant memetic structure's strong defenses. If the invading memetic structure somehow manages to bypass the outer defenses of a dominant memetic structure, the dominant memetic structure will then attempt to *absorb* the invading meme into its own structure, in such a way that the dominant memetic structure makes use of the invader and not the other way around. Any invading meme must successfully defeat or bypass *both* of these layers of defense in order to *bind* to the dominant meme in a manner advantageous to itself.

All successfully replicating memetic structures can correctly be labeled *thought viruses*. Memetic structures can only replicate by invading and manipulating other memetic structures. Thoughts cannot reproduce except in the human mind; though they can and often do lead to physical manifestations (this book is an example). These physical manifestations can only replicate the original thought virus upon contact with a human consciousness.

Characteristics of a Virus

Where pathogenic and inert viruses play a large role in the biological sphere, *thought viruses* command an even more prevalent role in the social